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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

A folding tool, comprising:

a handle;

an implement pivotally coupled to the handle, the implement

adapted to travel between a closed position and an open position and

b having a tang with a contoured surface; and

a spring arm having a first end coupled to the handle and a second end adapted to interact with the implement;

wherein the spring arm both exerts an opening force on the

9 implement during, at least a portion of the travel of the implement

between the closed position and the open position and locks the

implement into the open position.

- 1 2. The folding knife of claim 1, wherein the spring arm exerts
 2 the opening force on the implement via contact between the second end
 3 and the contoured surface.
- 1 3. The folding knife of claim 1, wherein the spring arm locks
 2 the implement into the open position via engagement with a portion of the
 3 contoured surface.
- 1 4. The folding knife of claim 3, wherein the spring arm must be 2 manually disengaged from the portion of the contoured surface prior to 3 rotation of the implement into the closed position.
- The folding knife of claim 4, further comprising an unlocking mechanism configured to disengage the spring arm from the contoured surface.
- 1 6. The folding knife of claim 5, wherein the unlocking mechanism is an unlocking latch.

- 7. The folding knife of claim 1, further comprising a leaf spring coupled to the handle, the leaf spring adapted to bias the spring arm into a position locking the implement into the open position.
- 1 8. The folding knife of claim 1, wherein the spring arm exerts a 2 closing force on the implement when the implement is in the closed 3 position and the opening force on the implement when the implement is 4 rotated several degrees away from the closed position.
- 9. The folding knife of claim 8, wherein the spring arm exerts the opening force on the implement when the implement is in the open position.
- 1 10. The folding knife of claim 9, wherein the implement is a blade.
- 1 11. The folding knife of claim 1, wherein the spring arm is in a plane defined by the implement.
- 12. The folding knife of claim 1, wherein the implement is a knife blade.
 - 1 13. A folding knife, comprising:
 - a handle;
 - a blade pivotally coupled to the handle, the blade having a closed position and an open position and having a tang with a contoured surface; and
 - a spring located in a plane defined by the blade, the spring
 having a proximal end coupled to the handle and a distal end adapted to
 exert a force on the blade via contact with the contoured surface.

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1 14. The folding knife of claim 13, wherein the spring locks the blade in the open position.

- 1 15. The folding knife of claim 14, further comprising an unlocking mechanism configured to release the blade from the open position.
- 1 16. The folding knife of claim 15, wherein the unlocking mechanism is an unlocking latch.
- 1 17. The folding knife of claim 13, wherein the spring exerts a
 2 closing force on the blade when the blade is in a first position and the
 3 spring exerts an opening force on the blade when the blade is in a second
 4 position.
- 1 18. The folding knife of claim 17, wherein the first position is 2 any position in the range between the closed position and ten degrees of 3 rotation away from the closed position.
- 1 19. The folding knife of claim 18, wherein the second position is 2 any position in the range between the open position and ten degrees of 3 rotation away from the closed position.
 - 1 20. The folding knife of claim 13, wherein the spring comprises a pair of spring arms, each approximately half the width of the blade.